GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:265
ANSWERED ON:27.02.2008
ENCROACHMENTS ON FOREST LAND
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Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a large area of the forest land in the country is under unauthorized occupation/encroachment;

(b) if so, the details thereof, State −wise;

(c) the steps taken by the Government to get the said land vacated; and

(d) the details of the such forest land got vacated as a result thereof, State-wise in the last three years?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY)

(a)&(b) As per the reports received from State/UT Governments, approximately 16.2 lakh hectare forest area in the country is under encroachment. The State-wise details are given in annexure.

(c)&(d) Protection and management of forest areas is primarily the responsibility of concerned State/UT Governments. Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) has issued guidelines to State/UT Governments to get the encroached land evicted from ineligible encroachers. The MoEF vide letter dated 21/12/2004 had requested the State/UT Governments to exclude tribals/forest dwellers, other than ineligible encroachers, from eviction drives. With the coming into force of the Schedule Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 and Rules thereof, State/UT Governments have to implement the provisions of the said Act. Accordingly the encroachment cases have to be examined as per the said Act.